



SIGAR

Office of the Special Inspector General  
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

## Lessons Learned Record of Interview

**Project Title:**

LL-01

**Interview Code:**

LL-01 [REDACTED]

**Date/Time:**

2/20/2015; 1315-1345

**Location:**

Brussels, Belgium

**SIGAR Attendees:**

Candace Rondeaux, Krisanne Campos

<b>Non- attribution Basis:</b>	Yes	x	No	
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<b>Recorded:</b>	Yes		No	x
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**Recording File Record Number:** n/a**Prepared By:**

Candace Rondeaux and Krisanne Campos

**Reviewed By:**

n/a

**Key Topics:**

- Role in developing Strategic Frameworks and Assessments
- Incorporating NATO into an integrated approach

- Developed framework for strategic framework
- Spent a lot of time rewriting strategic document saying we missed a lot; this cost institutional memory
- (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) [REDACTED]
- Integrated approach: intent to create campaign design working with all in Afghanistan and GIRoA
- Took NDS as goals, outlined what NATO/ISAF would do (NDR), UNAMA, and US effort, and then all agreed to integrate this approach to planning. This was driven by ANDS and NATO's operation plan. It had buy-in; it worked.
- Late 2008-2009: the team turned from 7 to 2 people (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) [REDACTED] and then they built up the office.
- In the first month, McNeil integrated this approach to design and planning
- (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) [REDACTED]
- CENTCOM: build narrative that we need: unity of command and effort. Needed narrative for NATO and needed detailed chart on how to stand up USFOR-A compound.



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- Moved forward quickly through CENTCOM – it was fast-tracked
- Campaign design effort: done in about one month and hand basis to start new campaign plan
- Clear-hold from this point; included in the integrated approach
- Needed international commitment and UNAMA to support this.
- Need to go under ANSF/US security umbrella
- Not all were willing to go into area where they really have a biased approach
- Learning moment in early July; a mission statement and analysis meeting with UNAMA and development agencies. No precepts or preconditions for discussion.
- Root cause analysis training: what would you do in what sequence? Went along until [early] 2008, then McKiernan wanted to push prioritization of effort and sequencing of combat plan (population densities, major roads)
- Population density: opportunistic. NGA represented with a map showing the population density according to Afghanistan. Third week of June 2008: brought it to life. Took it to General McKiernan to show. Brought to life population density and economic zones. It made me realized we needed more troops in the South. Did initial co-allocation of forces.
- JOIS – like CIDNE. Could evaluate coalition of risk; need more forces, riskier efforts
- (b)(6), (b)(7)(C): working at the time on assessment. September [2008]: realized we had difficulties in explaining to other external efforts. Needed to establish processes for strategic communications
- Assessment: plan for establishing Afghan Assessment Group (July-August 2008)
- OAG (Operation Assessment Group) – just charts, no real leadership or aims
- COMISAF meeting: says I want you to come up with what General Petraeus has been doing in Iraq.
- Reached out to (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) and asked, "How do you do assessments?" Come up with facts that are meaningful to Afghan government and NATO writ large
- (b)(6), (b)(7)(C): "gold standard" for external analysis; proponent [of this work]. With (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) feedback, I focused on developing a presentation.
- AIG started looking at viability and shareability of data. Focused on what we wanted to release.
- (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) – incorporated perceptions and not just indicators.
- In late 2008, COMISAF brings me to conferences and we start discussing with various agencies. Under-resourced and not a common understanding. Not good at communicating back and forth without taking a regional approach. What we got was we didn't have unified strategy with the government and didn't understand the regional approach to insurgency. UN, other multilaterals helped. Changes started occurring with ISAF
- December 2008: We need to come up with regional approach to this chapter when Holbrooke came on. Gave plans to Senator Obama and Biden and said, this is what we're doing. Said why not have regional coordination, State Department approach to both countries
- There was a lack of authority on Afghanistan writ large. Had only fought in Iraq before I came in. Really at the time it was a regional, not just Afghan, problem.
- Integrated efforts with military integrated approach with ANA, ANP
- NDS: asked them for feedback on strategy and got interesting results. Made us think we hadn't properly involved Afghans in planning. First step in working closer together.
- General Cone (CSTC-A) was a huge proponent of bringing everyone to the table and he had connections with MOI.



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- ANP needed to be NATO tasks, not just US or G8. How do we incorporate under the NATO umbrella? First, need to convince NATO that this is a combat fight, not peacekeeping. This took almost a year (planned in 2008)
- POMLETS: started as US
- PTT (NATO version of OMLET) – 4 nations doing it; started in the South
- Formalized in 2009 with decision
- All elements of strategy that McCrystal put in place with the exception of corruption and rule of law had been put in place by McKiernan. Development Efforts, counternarcotics nexus, and intelligence efforts
- Got authority from this and now need US authority to strike nexus targets. Used British jets to destroy targets until three to four months of efforts to get US approval
- I briefed McCrystal and team going through history of 2008-2009 initiatives
- Hadn't had any effort yet on who'd lead RoL effort. No buy-in from NATO or US at the time.
- McCrystal told me, "I don't see anything new to add to the strategy. I need to focus on execution and synchronization."
- That changed because of strategic assessment. Secretary Gates' idea, McCrystal confirmed. I left DC when SASC Committee approved him. I went back to Afghanistan to compare the ground. McCrystal calls and says you need to do an assessment in the first couple months you're there, and I say, "What do you need?" He asks, "Can we win in Afghanistan? Can it work? If so what changes do we make? What will it cost?" I recommended that you convince Secretary Gates and the Secretary General that this needs to be a NATO (i.e. full country) assessment, not just US. McCrystal Agreed. Calls back and says Gates agreed, too. Got approval for assessment before JCS approval. Did it right and set right tone. Want to leverage this for about ten other things. Learned what Petraeus did for assessment. That's what strategic assessment group will do: troop analysis, mission planning
- NTMA is brand new: need to review tasks and structure. Flush out tasks for ISAF and IJC. Wanted ISAF to have strategic tasks. Very few had funding streams to support staff for 60-day tour to strategic assessment group, but go most people we asked for.
- Stephen Biddle was a consensus maker and worked out beautifully. Their demand was open access and no thick skin.
- Assessments are not the same as strategic reviews. [in terms of internal assessments:] Could refuse to work with corrupt actors of ANSF, etc. Could build evidence for cases that Afghan judges could use. But all major things we wanted to do were blocked by Karzai.